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SENATE

REPORT
No. 787

PROVIDING MORE EFFICIENT DENTAL CARE FOR THE PERSONNEL OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY AND THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

SEPTEMBER 20 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 19), 1951.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. HUNT, from the Committee on Armed Services, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 781]

The Committee on Armed Services, to whom was referred the bill (S. 781) to provide more efficient dental care for the personnel of the United States Army and the United States Air Force, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PREVIOUS SENATE ACTION ON THE BILL

This bill is identical with S. 2380, Eighty-first Congress, which was passed by the Senate on August 9, 1949. No action was taken on the bill by the House of Representatives before the end of the Eighty-first Congress.

In view of the fact that the bill is identical with the one previously passed by the Senate, the full report on the previous bill is set forth below:

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

This bill proposes to establish for the Dental Corps of the United States Army and the dental service of the United States Air Force statutory duties which are comparable to those which were established for the Department of the Navy by Public Law 284, Seventy-ninth Congress, approved December 28, 1945. The objective of placing these duties on a statutory basis is to provide more efficient dental care for the Army and the Air Force.

EXPLANATION OF THE BILL

The bill provides that the Dental Corps of the Army and the dental service of the Air Force, operating through appropriate military channels, shall have responsibility for maintaining the dental health of Army and Air Force personnel. Matters such as staff planning and staff supervision, and the progressive develop-

ment of the dental service, are of such importance to the Army and the Air Force that it is appropriate that these two functions be governed by legislation similar to that previously enacted with respect to the Navy. While nothing in the bill would tend in any way to give the dental service any degree of autonomy, the bill does accomplish the very essential purpose of clearly defining the responsibility of dental personnel, and the avenues through which these responsibilities shall be fulfilled. As is the case with the Navy, the dental service for the Army and the Air Force is fixed at not less than 2 commissioned officers for each 1,000 members of the Army and Air Force on the active list or on extended active duty.

During the hearings on this bill 12 leading authorities from the dental profession of the United States, both from the armed services and from civilian life, were heard by the subcommittee. They all vigorously supported the provisions of a similar bill, S. 1205, then under consideration by the subcommittee. However, the Secretary of Defense felt that the bill as originally drafted was too restrictive, and gave the dental service a greater relative autonomy than is desirable in a military organization. The views of the Department have been carefully considered and the legislation redrafted as a committee bill.

This legislation, if enacted, would not entail the expenditure of additional funds, and would not require the appointment of additional personnel in the dental services.

The committee conducted a full hearing on the present bill, S. 781 and concluded that the action taken by the Senate during the Eighty-first Congress with respect to this matter was correct and for that reason again recommends the enactment of this proposed legislation.